Baby Steps

Created by Katsuki Hikaru

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Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
32
KATSUKI HIKARU

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ベイビーステップ

人物紹介

エーちゃん
丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。一度は諦めかけたプロへの道だったが、再度チャレンジすることに！ 2か月間のアメリカテニス修行を終え、準備万端!! プロへのラストチャンスとして全日本選手権に挑む！
ナツの存在が大きな支えに。

ナツ
鷹崎奈津

STC所属。全日本ジュニアの覇者でプロ志望。理論派・エーちゃんとは真逆の超感覚派で、それが互いの刺激に。アメリカの大学へテニス留学を決意！

清水亜希

母親がコーチをしていたが、全日本ジュニアを最後にコーチを入れることに。悩みながらも成長&自立中！

青井コーチ

STCでのエーちゃんのコーチ。元プロ選手という経験に裏付けされた指導でエーちゃんをサポート。

佐々木姫子

エーちゃんの試合に必ず駆けつけてくれる心優しい応援団。

影山小次郎

影山の片想いながら、なんだかイイ感じの二人♥

離れていても。。

ラブラブカップル♥

いっだってエーちゃんと一緒に戦ってるよ!!

ついに開幕！

全日本選手権!!

世界中から

覚悟は決まった!!

いざ、未来に挑戦!!!

全日本テニス選手権

その年の日本一のテニス選手を決める試合で、JTAランキング上位のほとんどのプロアマが集結！

ライバル集結!!

池 爽児
江川 遥
荒谷 竜
井出義明
雄波江 侵
門馬步夢

エーちゃんの1回戦の相手は、

JTAランキング82位の銀行員!!

小西公男

Baby Steps

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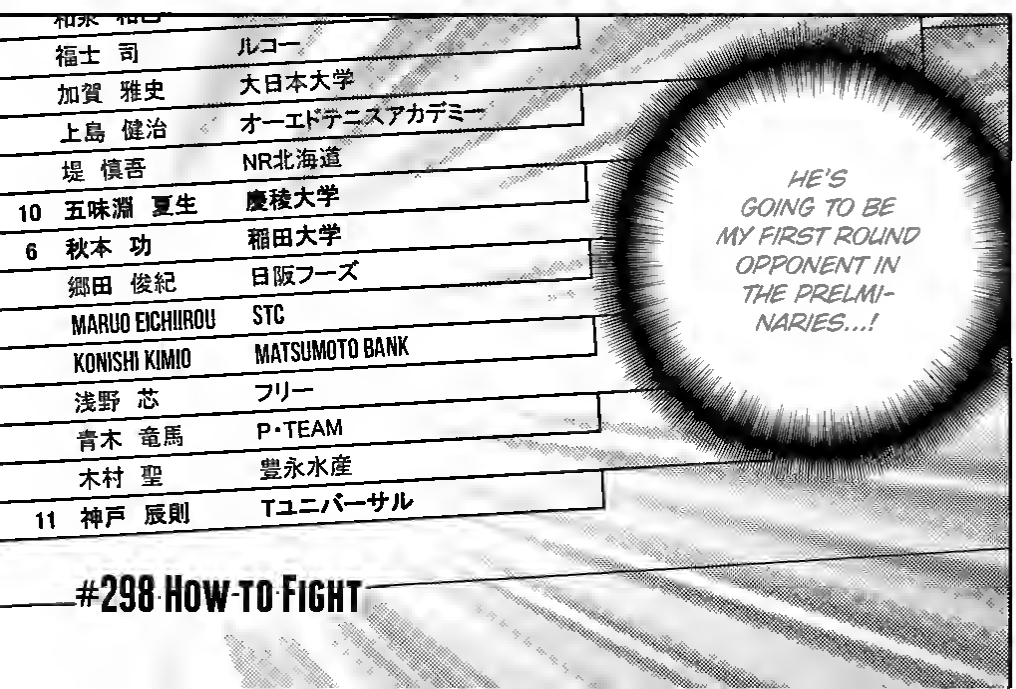
to Giant Strides

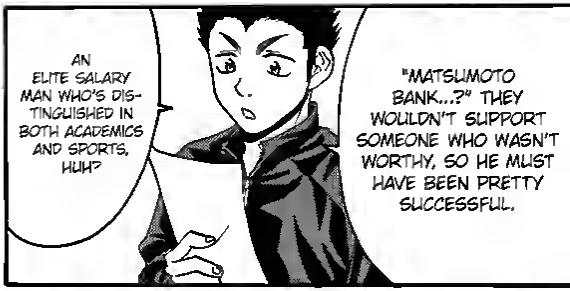
	福士　司	ルコー
	加賀　雅史	大日本大学
	上島　健治	オーエドテニスアカデミー
	堤　慎吾	NR北海道
10	五味淵　夏生	慶稜大学
6	秋本　功	稲田大学
	郷田　俊紀	日阪フーズ
	MARUO EICHIIROU	STC
	KONISHI KIMIO	MATSUMOTO BANK
	浅野　芯	フリー
	青木　竜馬	P・TEAM
	木村　聖	豊永水産
11	神戸　辰則	Tユニバーサル

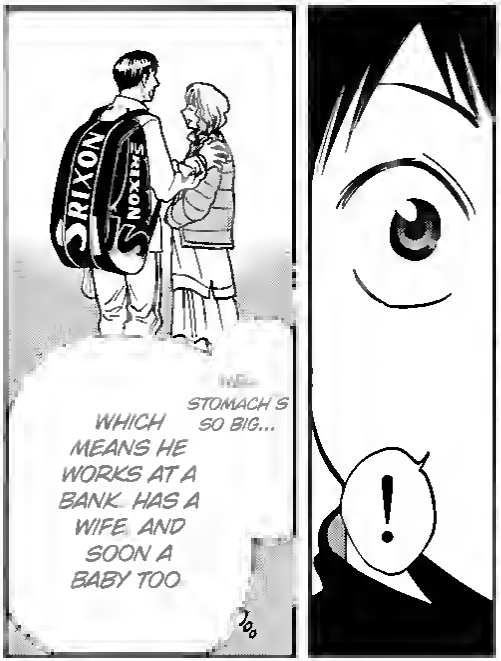


#298 How to Fight

IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, WHEN WE WERE IN 6TH GRADE HE ENTERED THE INKARE* WITH KYOURITSU UNIVERSITY AND WAS FEATURED IN A MAGAZINE. THAT WOULD MAKE HIM 7-8 YEARS OLDER THAN US.
AH, I KNOW HIM.
SRIXON
prince
chesse

*THE NICKNAME FOR AN INTERCOLLEGE PREFECTURAL TENNIS TOURNAMENT AROUND THE COUNTRY TO DETERMINE THE BEST UNIVERSITY.


AN ELITE SALARY MAN WHO'S DISTINGUISHED IN BOTH ACADEMICS AND SPORTS, HUH?
"MATSUMOTO BANK...?" THEY WOULDN'T SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO WASN'T WORTHY, SO HE MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY SUCCESSFUL.



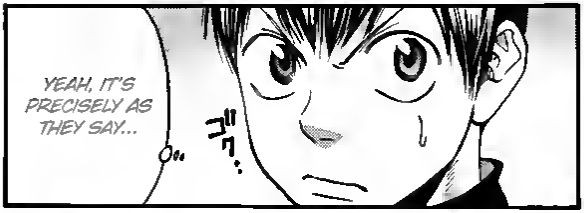
IF WE WANNA GO WILD IN THE MAIN TOURNAMENT TOO, THEN THERE'S NO TIME FOR US TO WASTE STRUGGLING ON THE PRELIMS.
EH?
ALL THAT AND HE'S IN THE TOP 100 JAPAN RANKINGS AND COMPETING FOR THE ALL JAPAN CHAMPIONSHIP...
THAT'S INCREDIBLE...

IF WE PERFORM WELL, WE'LL BE ABLE TO RIDE THE MOMENTUM BETTER THAN IF WE ENTERED THE MAIN TOURNAMENT STRAIGHT AWAY. HOWEVER IF WE STRUGGLE, WE'LL END UP HANDICAPPED BY OUR OWN FATIGUE.
WE'VE GOTTA PLAY THREE MORE MATCHES THAN TAKUMA OR NABAE BECAUSE OF THESE PRELIMS.

IN A TOURNAMENT WITH CONSECUTIVE MATCHES LIKE THIS, THAT'S ALSO AN IMPORTANT STRATEGY.
IT COMES DOWN TO HOW MUCH STAMINA WE CAN CONSERVE WHILE STILL WINNING.

MY OPPONENT IS SEEDED, HOWEVER HE'S ONLY IN HIS FIRST YEAR AS A PRO, SO I THINK IT'LL BE OKAY.
IN PARTICULAR, WE HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR EXCELLENT TECHNIQUE
ANYWAY, IT'S NOT LIKE THE JUNIORS.

OH, I UNDERSTAND.
I HADN'T REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT THAT WAY...
ellesse


YEAH, IT'S PRECISELY AS THEY SAY...
ゴク…

I HAVE TO KEEP WINNING. HOW WILL I OVERCOME THESE MATCHES, UNLIKE ANYTHING I'VE PLAYED BEFORE?
SRIXON

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, MY FIRST MATCH HERE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
IN THE ALL JAPAN JUNIOR, MY STRUGGLE IN THE FIRST MATCH AFFECTED THOSE THAT FOLLOWED, RESULTING IN ME RUNNING OUT OF STRENGTH DURING THE SEMI-FINALS...

OKAY, I CAN TELL FROM THIS WARM UP
THAT I'M PROBABLY BETTER THAN HE IS.
THOUGH TENNIS ISN'T SO SIMPLE THAT BEING BETTER THAN YOUR OPPONENT WILL ASSURE YOU VICTORY.
I HAVE TO FOCUS MY MIND ON BECOMING A PRO. I'LL GO IN WITH THE DRIVE THAT I ABSOLUTELY CANNOT LOSE TO AN AMATEUR.

IF I CAN WIN THE CHAMPIONSHIP IN THE MAIN ROUNDS, I CAN DEFINITELY GO PRO
WITH THAT IN MIND, IT'S EXPECTED THAT I'LL PUT MY ALL INTO EACH AND EVERY BALL.
I'LL HASTEN THIS MATCH AND END IT EVEN ONE POINT FASTER!
THE ALL JAPAN CHAMPIONSHIP PRELIMINARIES, FIRST MATCH.
MARUO EICHIIROU VS KONISHI KIMIO WILL NOW COMMENCE.

THREE-SET MATCH.
MARUO'S SERVICE PLAY!
FIRST THINGS FIRST, I HAVE TO KEEP MY SERVE!!
GOING WITH A HIGH SUCCESS FAST SERVE!

A CHANCE RIGHT OFF THE BAT.
KUH.
AN ANGLED SHOT WITH 1/64 PRECISION!!

10
NOT BAD!
AL-RIGHT.
!
OOH, THAT SHOT WAS KIND OF STRANGE BUT BEAUTIFULLY EXECUTED.
A SUPERB COURSE WITH SUPERB CONTROL.
APPARENTLY HE'S STILL ONLY A JUNIOR AT STC!

ALL JAPAN TENNIS
全日本テニス選手権
1 2 3
MARUO EICHIIROU
3
KONISHI KIMIO
2
HIS SERVES ARE BETTER THAN I THOUGHT THEY'D BE
KUH.
HOW-EVER HE'S NOT FORCING AN ATTACK AND IS GOING WITH A DEFENSIVE STYLE.
HIS SHOTS ARE COMING DEEP AND ARE STABLE, BUT...
THE COURSES AREN'T THAT DIFFICULT TO RETURN.

WHICH MEANS I'LL GO AND QUICKLY TAKE THE UPPER HAND!
UGH...
ADVANTAGE — KONISHI
CRAP ALTHOUGH I'M SCORING MORE POINTS,
I CAN'T SCORE IN MY RETURN GAME, MEANING THE SCORE'S STILL A TIE.
AND I'M ABLE TO KEEP MY SERVE GAME OVERWHELMINGLY...
全日本テニス選手権
1 2 3
MARUO EICHIIROU 3
KONISHI KIMIO 2
HOWEVER I CAN STILL PLAY ASSERTIVELY

AS LONG AS I CAN CONNECT, I CAN RETURN THEM WITH POWER...!
BECAUSE THE OPPONENT'S SERVES ARE THIS GOOD.

OUT! GAME TO KONISHI. 3—3
DAMMIT... WAS I IN TOO MUCH OF A RUSH?

1
EICHIIROU
4
KIMIO
3
1 2 3
MARUO EICHIIROU
4
KONISHI KIMIO
4
MARUO EICHIIROU
5
KONISHI KIMIO
4
I'LL USE THE DATA I'VE GATHERED THUS FAR AND START TAKING EVEN MORE RISKS.
OKAY. IF I BREAK NEXT GAME, I'LL TAKE THE SET. AT THE VERY LEAST, I CAN DO THAT.
カキカキ
カキ

I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO SECURE MYSELF A BREAK CHANCE EARLY THOUGH.
GAME COUNT, 5-4, 30-30
THINKING ABOUT IT WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING.
I'LL TAKE HIM ON WITH EVERYTHING I'VE GOT..!
FOR NOW I'LL BREAK IN THIS GAME AND TAKE THE SET!

AFTER ONE FOREHAND SWING...
NOW I'LL USE MY FIRST FAST FOREHAND SLICE OF THE MATCH!

IT CAN'T BE HELPED, THAT WAS A HIGH-RISK SHOT.
FW
KUH.
OUT, 40—30
AD-VANTAGE MARUO!
THAT'S MY THIRD ADVANTAGE THIS GAME... I'LL END IT HERE!

BY CHANGING THE PACE AND SNATCHING AWAY HIS TIMING, I WILL TAKE THE ADVANTAGE.
BELIEVE IN THE DATA.
IF I RUSH THINGS, I WON'T SCORE.
A NET-IN... IT'S SLOWED!
A CHANCE!
I'LL FINISH THIS... IN ONE STRIKE!!

AH.
KUH.
トン
トン
FIRST SET WON BY MARUO, 6–4
SFX: HUFF
ホッ
TOUR TEAM
S-SORRY ABOUT THAT.

I'M ABLE TO SCORE POINTS, SO SHOULD I JUST CONTINUE AS I HAVE BEEN?
THAT SAID, I STILL WON THE SET.
THAT'S A RELIEF. I GOT LUCKY AND MANAGED TO TAKE THE SET. I CAN'T KEEP THIS UP, THOUGH.
THERE'S NO GUARANTEE MY BODY WILL HOLD UP UNTIL THE MAIN MATCHES IF I KEEP THIS UP
IT COMES DOWN TO HOW MUCH STAMINA WE CAN CONSERVE WHILE STILL WINNING
I'M STILL NOT USING MY ABILITIES TO THEIR FULL EXTENT...
IT'S LIKE I'M PLAYING THE MATCH INEFFICIENTLY.
NO, I FEEL LIKE THERE'S A BETTER WAY.
CONSERVE...? IS THERE EVEN A WAY TO DO THAT?
.....